

Radicalization and violent extremism: How can youth express themselves



Students
Brochure



Helping you IS WHAT WE CAN DO BEST

This brochure provides practical advice to help you discuss with your peers, teachers and family members on violent acts, and violent radicalization and extremism issues.



C Content

1. How can we discuss about violent radicalisation and extremism?.....	4
2. What is violent extremism and terrorism?.....	4
3. How can i define a violent extremist or terrorist?.....	5
4. Which is the best age to discuss about radicalization and violent extremism with parents and teachers?.....	6
5. How can i discuss about violent acts related to radicalisation and extremism?.....	7
6. Are you able to look at photos or videos of terrorist acts?.....	7
7. How can you discuss about violent extremism and terrorism without creating harmful stereotypes?.....	8
8. What matters the most, is that you will never be alone.....	9
9. if i experience continuous anxiety or emotional disorder symptoms, what should i do?.....	10

1.

HOW CAN WE DISCUSS ABOUT VIOLENT RADICALISATION AND EXTREMISM ?

Let us be honest: violent acts due to violent radicalization and extremism are terrifying, even though they are committed thousands of miles away or close to our communities. Whenever a tragic event occurs, your parents and teachers need to know how to explain such extreme acts to you. This leads to a dilemma - how can they make you have a stronger sense of safety by honestly answering to your questions regarding this form of violence in our society.

HOW DOES RADICALISATION TURN INTO VIOLENCE?

Radicalization that leads to violence is a process during which individuals espouse an extreme belief system, including the desire to encourage, facilitate or use violence, so as to achieve social transformation by imposing an ideology, a political project or an ideal.

SIMPLY PUT

Violent radicalization occurs when an individual believes they have the right to encourage or use violence to impose an idea they deem significant.

2.

WHAT IS VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM?

VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Extremism is when one embraces a position towards the identity, culture, society, religion or politics that is extreme compared to the usual spectrum of beliefs in a society. Such extremism becomes violent when using violent means to protect or promote such a position. Violent extremism involves terrorism, but also any other act of divisive or violent hatred driven by ideological motives.

TERRORISM

Terrorism is a strategy of violent acts introduced to terrorize, intimidate people or pressure a government with the aim of drawing attention to political, ideological, cultural, religious or social inquiries. It serves as a violent extremism indicator and final outcome; it is often developed and promoted by extremist groups, whose aim is to force a society or government into taking decisions or adopting orientations that they otherwise would not choose to implement.

SIMPLY PUT

VIOLENT EXTREMISM occurs when an individual supports and embraces extreme beliefs contrary to the best interests of the community as a whole. More often than not, such individuals encourage or use violence to impose their ideas.

TERRORISM is an act of intimidation, causing fear by means of violence to impose ideas and beliefs while attacking the way of life and freedom of innocent people.

3. HOW CAN I DEFINE A VIOLENT EXTREMIST OR TERRORIST?

Your understanding will vary based on your age, character and personality. There is no “one size fits all”. These phenomena are perceived differently by certain ages or students.

- *For example, according to young children: “extremism occurs when one behaves badly and think they have a good reason to do so. But they believe that they can deliver their message more peacefully.”*
- *If you are older, you may be able to comprehend a more complex vocabulary; nevertheless, your understanding on these phenomena depends on your comprehension skills.*

If you are not familiar with violent extremism, terrorism or similar acts,

you may hold these discussions with teachers in a more opportune moment. Otherwise, discuss with parents, teachers or peers to overcome your personal fear.

It is crucial to remain calm and not feel intimidated after each discussion on these topics.

WHO IS A TERRORIST?

Terrorists or violent extremists are individuals who seek to persuade others that their ideas are just while using violence.

- *Most people do not act this way and such situations are rare.*
- *“Usually people do not try to persuade others using violence. This happens very rarely.”*
- *There are only a few actual violent extremists and terrorists. We talk a lot about them on the news and on TV, which gives you the impression that they are more in number than in reality.*
- *“There are only a few terrorists.”*
- *“And they are not everywhere.”*

It is important to understand the importance of promoting your ideas and respecting others who think differently. Furthermore, try to identify peaceful means to resolve conflicts or differences.

4. WHICH IS THE BEST AGE TO DISCUSS ABOUT RADICALIZATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM WITH PARENTS AND TEACHERS?

DISCUSSION

terrorism at a very early age. Unless you are ready, it is critical to avoid discussing about these issues so as not to feel intimidated or anxious.

Consider your age, nature of the questions that concern you, and your need to understand or express something about the problem.

5. HOW CAN I DISCUSS ABOUT VIOLENT ACTS RELATED TO RADICALISATION AND EXTREMISM??

To begin with, you need a favorable environment to express your emotions and fear regarding the situation.

FREQUENT QUESTIONS ADULTS CAN ASK REGARDING EXTREME EXTREMISM AND RADICALISATION:

“How do you feel?”

“What is your opinion about the current situation?”

“Are you worried?”

You must be able to identify your information about violent extremism, your understanding and the source of this data.

In cases of situations triggered by radicalization and violent extremism, it is perfectly normal to have opinions and feelings about them.

6. ARE YOU ABLE TO LOOK AT PHOTOS OR VIDEOS OF TERRORIST ACTS?

Terrorist acts photos or videos, violent or not, can cause anxiety and unpleasant experiences, especially when you are very young.

We recommend avoiding exposure to this kind of recurring images or news. They might give you the idea of a terrible and cruel world.

However, in case of witnessing such images, try to understand what is going on and talk to your family or adults about what you have seen and what you are feeling.

If you would rather not discuss about such topics, tell this to the adults you are close with.

Besides, if you and your family are watching television programs depicting terrorist acts, make sure you don't mind it and be able to keep watching what is being broadcast.

Still, you could ask your relatives to help you analyze the information by adding details, when necessary, and always seamlessly.

Also, you could suggest your parents changing the channel by saying: *"Enough already with violence, it is not the only thing happening in the world, and it is quite overestimated."*

Do not forget that when a violent act occurs, you can refer to parents and teachers to find out more about the current situation and maintain your health. This creates the possibility for a proper conversation and the chance to correct any false information that you might have seen, heard or read.

7. HOW CAN YOU DISCUSS ABOUT VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM WITHOUT CREATING HARMFUL STEREOTYPES?

Regardless of its form, there are in fact only a few extremist individuals standing behind violence. Violence can be associated with different causes or ideological motivations. One could embrace a certain ideology without using violence, likewise a group member could use violence to promote an ideology without other group members approving or participating in violent acts.

Violent extremism (or terrorism) is a social problem with no relation to a specific community, group or religion.

It is important not to arouse prejudices that may cause you to feel intimidated by certain groups or communities.

“Both bad and good people belong to all religions.”

“We cannot generalize the entire community because of one person’s wrongdoing. If someone steals something, we already know that this does not imply that every city resident is a thief.”

8.

WHAT MATTERS THE MOST, IS THAT YOU WILL NEVER BE ALONE

A POSSIBLE QUESTION

“Could it happen to me? To my mother and father? To my family?”

A POSSIBLE ANSWER

“Such things happen very rarely.” “What occurred was terrible, but fortunately it does not happen often.”

YOUR WELLBEING

It is vital that by the end of the conversation with adults or professionals, you feel solely safe and not anxious or intimidated. If you need other people by your side as you do not feel serene, just ask for it.

YOUR TRUST

Eventually, it is important to perceive the world and society as a safe haven, where the majority of people is not considered a threat.

In addition to great things happening in your community and other countries, there are a lot of people doing wonderful things all around the world, which are making the world a better place.

Following such events, there is nothing for you to worry about, stay close to your relatives, friends, teachers, etc. and continue your usual activities readily and peacefully.

9.

IF I EXPERIENCE CONTINUOUS ANXIETY OR EMOTIONAL DISORDER SYMPTOMS, WHAT SHOULD I DO?

As students, you react differently to actions related to violent radicalization and extremism, with some of you being affected more than others.

It is important to pay attention to your behavior and physical symptoms, thus being able to identify any signs of anxiety or emotional disorder. You should be aware that such signs are not exclusive to exposure to media coverage of violent radicalization and extremism.

If symptoms persist, consider seeking professional help, talking to adults or family members.

You must not forget that you express emotions differently from adults!

If you think you are experiencing anxiety, talk to adults, ask them to make you feel safe, protected, and to stay by your side. Adults can help you cope with feelings caused by unpleasant situations.

BEHAVIOR	PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS	SLEEPING DISORDERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unusual anxiety• Evident anxiety• Aggressive response• Isolation• Regression	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headache• Stomach ache• Loss of appetite	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recurring nightmares• Problems with sleep• Refusing to go to bed• Co-sleeping with a parent

WHY SHOULD I CONTACT THE COORDINATION CENTER FOR COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM (CVE)?

CVE owns a professional team, whose main task is to provide the necessary training, support and psycho-social assistance for addressing radicalization. If necessary, we could also direct you to additional services and sources within the community.

- **Sources:**

<https://cve.gov.al/>

You will find helpful source materials.

- **Some services**

The main goal of our team is to offer you support

- **Specialized means**

To obtain a better understanding of all radicalization aspects

- **Assistance is available 24/7**

National Emergency Center

<http://urgjenca.gov.al/>

112

State Police 129



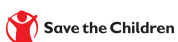


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